sionaries had not yet learned enough Iranxe to make working with informants possible.

As all of the following information, unless otherwise specified, relates to the Waklĭtisu band, a short description of this band is in order. Today the band consists of 18 individuals, of which Julio is the chief. About 5 years ago, before a measles epidemic decimated it, the band was roughly twice the size it is today. Julio is a man of middle age, has three wives and two children, and probably holds his leadership by being the strongest and ablest man in the band. Except for one of Julio's wives and her daughter who are Elótasu, the members of the band are Waklĭtisu and related to one another. Julio took the Elótasu woman from the Elótasu band by killing her husband. He claims he did this because the Elótasu chief stole one of his wives some years ago. He claims he is going to steal another wife, for every chief is supposed to have four. Only three other men, Martin, Marciano, and Joaquin, are married, each having one wife. The remaining four are either widowers or as yet unmarried.

Of all the Indians which I have visited in Mato Grosso the members of this band of Nambicuara were the most miserable. Of the eight men, one had syphilis, another had some kind of infection in his side, another had an injured foot, another was covered with some kind of scaly skin disease from head to foot, and another was deaf and dumb. The women and children, however, appeared to be healthy. Owing to the fact that they use no hammocks but sleep on the ground, they are always covered with dirt. On cold nights they remove the fires and sleep in the warm ashes. The Waklĭtisu wear clothes only when they are given by the missionaries, who ask that they be worn. Their distaste for bathing permits not only a covering of dust and ashes to accumulate on their skin and hair but also particles of decayed meat and fish, which, combined with stale sweat, makes proximity to them rather distasteful. They also appear to be heavily infected with internal parasites, for their stomaches are distended and they are continually passing wind. On several occasions when a number of them had crowded into the small room we used for working we had to cease work in order to air the room.

In their manners the Nambicuara also contrast sharply with the other tribes I visited. The

6: Levi-Strauss E-5 (1938-1939) 1943
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sometimes the fathers of several children, walking together at dusk and tenderly embracing each other; always

tarũtę ialásiętę

(these are) brothers-in-law embracing (each other).

Certain games, too, such as the "scratch game" (in which the opponents try to scratch each other especially in the face), are commonly played by brothers-in-law.

But the close relationship between "cross cousins actually or potentially allied through a sister's marriage"—the more accurate translation of the aboriginal term for brother-in-law—may extend far beyond the family tie. Actually, it is sometimes used to establish between individuals not belonging to the same kin group new links of a special nature, the function of which is to amalgamate into a single familial unit several formerly unrelated groups. This is brought out clearly in the following case.

During the past twenty years, several epidemics nearly destroyed the central, northern and western divisions of the Nambikuara. Several groups were decimated to such an extent that they could no longer successfully maintain a socially autonomous existence. In the hope of reconstituting functioning units, some of these, therefore, attempted to join forces, In the course of our field-work we met and worked with such a merged group made up of seventeen individuals using the northern dialect (*Sabãnę* group) and thirty-four using the central dialect (*Tarãndę* group). Each of the originally distinct groups, however, lived under the guidance of its own chief, although both leaders closely cooperated. It is probable that the demographic crisis did not by itself account for this situation, since the people of the second group formed merely a fraction of a more numerous unit from which it had split off for reasons unknown to us. However, from several events which occurred during our stay with them, we deduced that the break had been caused by political dissention, the details of which remained obscure to us. In any event, these groups now travelled and lived together although two separate but contiguous camps were maintained in which the families formed distinct circles, each around its own fire. The most amazing feature of this curious organization was that the two groups did not speak the same language and were able to understand one another only through interpreters; fortunately, one or two individuals belonging to each group had sufficient knowledge of the other dialect to act as intermediaries. Even the two chiefs could not communicate directly. The problem of whether these dialects belong to the same linguistic stock need not be raised here; but the Northern group undoubtedly must be classified with the Nambikuara cultural family because of the similarities of material culture and of the life pattern, and chiefly because of the psychological attitude of the people, who very evidently believed in their close affinity to the Central group.